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PROCEEDINGS  
OF  
THE ROYAL GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY.

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SESSION 1864-65.

*First Meeting, November 14th, 1864.*

[ISSUED 10TH JANUARY, 1865.]

SIR RODERICK I. MURCHISON, K.C.B., PRESIDENT, in the Chair.

ELECTIONS.—*Captain Wade Browne; Domenick Colnaghi, Esq.; Sir James Duke, Bart.; James Haysman, Esq.; Frederick Symonds, Esq.*

PRINCIPAL ACCESSIONS TO THE LIBRARY since the last Meeting, June 27, 1864.—‘ Vacation Tourists and Notes of Travel, in 1862 and 1863,’ edited by Francis Galton, Esq. Alexander Lehmann’s ‘Reise nach Buchara und Samarkand in den Jahren 1841 und 1842.’ ‘Mémoires sur la Chine,’ par le Comte d’Escayrac de Lauture. ‘Voyage of the *Novara*,’ by Dr. Karl Scherzer. (3 vols.) ‘Manual of Geology,’ by James D. Dana, M.A. ‘Dictionary of Geography,’ by Alexander Keith Johnson. ‘Report upon the Plains and Rivers of Canterbury, New Zealand,’ by W. T. Doyne. ‘A Mission to the King of Dahome,’ by Captain Burton. (2 vols.) Continuations of ‘Journals,’ ‘Transactions,’ &c. &c.

ACCESSIONS TO THE MAP-ROOM since the last Meeting, June 27, 1864.—Map of Prussia, on 12 sheets, by the Prussian Government, scale 1 inch to 9½ miles. French Charts, 91 in number. Maps of New Zealand, by the War Office. Maps of Algeria, by the French Dépôt de la Guerre, 8 in number, various scales. Topographical Map of France, published on 258 sheets, scale  $\frac{1}{40000}$ : received 193 sheets. Russian Maps of Asiatic Russia, on 6 sheets, presented by M. A. Hippius. Ordnance Maps—Parishes, Towns, Counties in 6276 sheets; Domesday-Books, in 33 vols.; Area-Books, 341. Admiralty Charts, 27 sheets, up to publication. A Manuscript Map of Captain Speke’s routes in Eastern Africa, presented by the Family of Captain Speke, scale 1° to 3 inches. A Manuscript Map of the Dutch Ladies’ route in the district of the Bahr el Ghazal, presented by J. A. Tinné, Esq.—Total, 6328 sheets.

The PRESIDENT opened the Session with the following observations :—

Assembled as we now are to commence the thirty-fifth Session of this Society, we begin, as last year, with the consideration of those geographical problems regarding the interior of Africa which are still in process of solution. This is indeed a very natural course; for, whilst our enterprising countrymen well know that, of all distant regions, Africa offers the widest untrodden field for their researches, they also feel that, being the most difficult and hazardous, the greater will be the honour and distinction gained by its successful exploration.

It was this stimulus that urged onward the distinguished explorer Speke, who, on his return last year with his companion, Grant, received, not only at our hands, but at those of the nation, a tribute of approbation never to be forgotten, and which will long serve as an incitement to future travellers. In the interval which has elapsed since the brilliant reception of Speke in this hall, we have had, alas! to lament the loss of that gallant spirit. The catastrophe of his death naturally threw a gloom over the proceedings of our associates at the late Meeting of the British Association at Bath. As the President of the Section of Geography and Ethnology, it fell to my duty to transmit a few words of condolence to his afflicted parents, as coming from the united body of Geographers and Ethnologists; and subsequently I had the melancholy privilege (in conjunction with Grant and Livingstone) of following to the grave the remains of the undaunted traveller who had thus been taken from us in the zenith of his career, at a time when he ardently desired to win new triumphs in the chosen field of his researches.

I am sure, gentlemen, you will desire, as I do, to honour the memory of the man who was the first among Europeans to traverse Equatorial Central Africa from south to north, and who, proceeding from his own lake, Victoria Nyanza, followed its waters to the mouth of the Nile. Imbued with this feeling, I lost no time, after his interment, in taking steps towards the erection of a monument to his memory, by means of subscription; and I am happy to find that already a number of my colleagues have affixed their names to the list which, after the additions it may receive in the days following this meeting, will go forth as our appeal to the public.

At our next anniversary it will be my duty to give you a brief sketch of the life of this devoted explorer; and in the mean time, whilst inviting you to subscribe to his memorial, I may add that our object is simply to obtain a sum sufficient to erect an obelisk similar to that which was reared in honour of Lieutenant Bellot

who perished in the search after Franklin. On this monument the name of John Hanning Speke will stand out as the simplest and best eulogy of his main achievement.

Apart from this sorrowful episode, the proceedings of the Geographers and Ethnologists at the Bath meeting were eminently successful. I may say it with satisfaction, that this Section of the British Association (a section formed on a suggestion of my own in 1847) has now become so attractive, that it is, if possible, more numerously attended than that of Geology, which had hitherto taken the lead in popularity. A generous and healthy rivalry like this, is a sure sign that much is common to the two noble sciences of Geography and Geology, and that the cultivators of the one are effectively throwing light on the researches of the other.

Referring you to the published Reports for an account of the numerous interesting and original papers which were read before the Geographical Section at Bath, I must here call especial attention to one portion of our proceedings. A recommendation was proposed by our indefatigable associate Mr. Findlay, having for its object the continuation of those researches into the depth of the ocean and the nature of the sea-bottom that attracted so much attention a few years ago. This was considered to promise such decided advantages to science, that I had sincere gratification in obtaining the sanction of the Association at large to the recommendation, and a Committee was nominated (consisting of Admiral Collinson, Mr. Findlay, and myself) for the purpose of requesting Her Majesty's Government to cause the vessels of the Royal navy to be furnished with the apparatus adapted by Dr. Wallich and used by H.M.'s ship *Bulldog*, commanded by Sir L. M'Clintock, in order to pursue these important investigations. It is to be hoped, in the wording of the recommendation, that the exigencies of H.M.'s navy and the discipline of the ships may permit these researches to be carried out, at least to some extent, and that the records may be forwarded to the Hydrographic Department, and the specimens to the Geological Museum, where they may be rendered available to the public.

To pass on to the subjects for consideration at this our opening meeting, I have to say that the first memoir to be read is one by Captain Burton, on the highly interesting subject of the drainage of Central Africa, particularly as regards the head-waters of the Nile; and I have no doubt that this energetic and accomplished traveller will so put the case as to arouse in us the strongest desire to see cleared up, by renewed expeditions, this great question which was so ably set forth by Dr. Beke, whose views have since been

supported by the geographer Findlay, as well as by the antiquarian researches of Mr. John Hogg and Mr. Vaux. It is true that one or more of these points may probably be elucidated by the enterprising Baker, direct news from whom we are all now eagerly awaiting; for, according to the accounts gleaned by Petherick from the men belonging to an Arab trader, Baker had recently visited some great lake, probably the Luta Nzigé.

After the last journey of Livingstone towards the northern end of his lake Nyassa, when he came to the conclusion that no large water flowed into it from the north, it has become evident that no problem concerning the internal drainage of Africa can be more deserving of attention than the configuration of the country between the northern end of Nyassa and the southern end of Tanganyika, an interval of about 360 miles. To fill up this void in our maps of Africa, and to settle the great question to be brought before us this evening, I venture to say that (with the exception of Livingstone himself) no one is more competent than his former coadjutor, Dr. Kirk, should he have the opportunity to lead an exploring party in this direction. His union of varied Natural History knowledge, undaunted perseverance, and acclimatised constitution, not to forget his conciliatory manners, eminently fit him for an enterprise which would task the resources of most travellers.

Another communication to be laid before you this evening will be a recent letter from M. Du Chaillu, addressed to myself,—one of several which he has written to his friends in this country on the eve of his departure for the unknown interior of Western Equatorial Africa. I doubt not that this letter will meet with approval, even on the part of those who most criticised the narrative of his former journeys; for it exhibits the honesty and tenacity of purpose, as well as the lofty aims of this courageous explorer. After occupying several months in accumulating large collections of Natural History objects, which he has forwarded to London (including large specimens of the Gorilla in the preserved state for presentation to the British Museum, and a live Gorilla to be offered to the Zoological Society), the solitary explorer has now departed on his errand to reach the central watershed of Africa, where he supposes that the Congo, as well as the western branches of the Nile, take their origin.

Our Assistant-Secretary, Mr. Bates, has performed the useful duty of abridging, for communication to this meeting, a portion of the voluminous notes of the late Richard Thornton, referring to his exploration of the snow-capped mountain of Kilima-ndjaro. Mr. Thornton, in the earliest and last parts of his scientific career, acted

in co-operation with Dr. Livingstone on the Zambesi, and in the interval was the companion of Baron von der Decken in his first remarkable expedition. The results of the labours of this fine young man, so prematurely cut off, must be divided between the Geological and the Geographical Societies; for Richard Thornton possessed just the character which I can best appreciate, namely, that of a man who unites in his own person the power of deciphering the outlines of the surface of the earth with that of explaining the structure of its crust and the changes it has successively undergone.

Before we proceed to the business of the meeting, let me inform you that I have received a letter from our medallist of last session, the Baron Charles von der Decken, written from the Seychelles Islands, on his way to Zanzibar, where, doubtless, Her Majesty's Consul, at the instance of Earl Russell, and our naval officers, by the direction of the Duke of Somerset, will do everything in their power to facilitate his putting together the river-steamers which he takes with him, and by which he hopes to ascend the Jub, or some neighbouring river. To carry his enterprise to a successful conclusion, this self-sacrificing explorer will need the assistance of the Egyptian authorities, as it is his intention, if possible, to cross the watershed which divides the East African rivers from the basin of the Nile, and, possessing only a formal passport of the Pasha, he has applied to me to procure for him a firman of a more influential character. This, I am happy to say, is in a fair way of being arranged, as I have obtained from Sir H. Bulwer, Her Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople, a promise that he will take such steps as he doubts not will speedily procure the transmission to Zanzibar of a firman, giving to Baron von der Decken the means of obtaining the aid he desires. Thus we may hope that from the east as well as the west side of Africa, successful explorations will soon lay open many portions of the interior of that continent which still remain unknown.

The interest which the public and ourselves take in all questions of African exploration will, I am happy to say, be kept alive through the ensuing session by the publication of Dr. Livingstone and Mr. Charles Livingstone's narrative of the expedition to the Zambesi and Lake Nyassa; and also by the issue of a volume by the gallant Capt. Grant, before he returns to military service in India, entitled 'A Walk across Africa,' in which the domestic scenes of the natives of Equatorial Africa will be vividly described.

In concluding, allow me to say that, in discussing any African questions in which theory is involved, I trust our proceedings may be conducted as heretofore with that mutual good feeling which has

always characterized them. Let discussions which assume too disputatious a character be confined to the various periodicals open to such contributions, where the contending parties may find full space to advocate their respective views. Exciting as these topics are, and valuable as they often prove in leading to great discoveries, their real importance must be determined by the testimony of such patient observers as Livingstone and others now happily present in this room, whose well-defined observations are recorded in the volumes of our Society.

Lastly, let me congratulate you on our increasing prosperity, as testified by the cheering fact that, at the present meeting of the Session, no less than thirty-seven candidates desire to be enrolled among the Fellows of the Royal Geographical Society.

CAPTAIN R. F. BURTON then read the following Paper—

1. *Lake Tanganyika, Ptolemy's Western Lake-Reservoir of the Nile.* By  
CAPTAIN R. F. BURTON.

THE author commenced by expressing his recognition of the many noble qualities of Captain Speke; his courage, energy, and perseverance. But he could not accept his "settlement" of the Nile. There were five objections to deriving the true Nile from the supposed Victoria Nyanza. 1, the difference in the levels of the upper and lower part of the lake; 2, the Mwerango River rising from hills in the middle of the lake; 3, the road through the lake; 4, the inundation of the southern part of the lake for 13 miles, whilst the low northern shore is never flooded; 5, the swelling of the lake during the dry periods of the Nile, and *vice versa*. It might, however, be observed that, whilst refusing to accept the present settlement of the great problem, he in nowise proposed to settle the question: this must be left to time. Dr. Livingstone and Dr. Kirk, in their recent exploration of Lake Nyassa, threw remarkable light on the question, inasmuch as they had stated their convictions to be that no great river entered this lake from the north; the drainage of Lake Tanganyika, therefore, could not lie towards Lake Nyassa. Moreover, Dr. Kirk had informed the author that there was no community of species between the shells collected by Captain Burton in Tanganyika and those collected by Dr. Kirk in Nyassa; besides the "salt weed" (*Potamogeton pectinatus*, with *Valisneria spiralis*) found in Nyassa was unknown in Tanganyika. With regard to the effluence of the waters of Tanganyika in the opposite direction, namely, towards the Nile, Captain Burton confessed that what he learned when on the lake in 1858 militated against the supposition of a northern outflow. The information received about